

Emergency Response News



March 2001

IDEM oversees cleanup of diesel fuel spill in Elkhart County

Agencies team up to locate the responsible party.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), Elkhart County Health Department and Indiana Department of Natural Resources collaborated to clean up and investigate a diesel fuel spill along a roadway in Elkhart County.

On March 21, Jennifer Toby of the Elkhart County Health Department was notified about a diesel fuel spill along West Hively in Elkhart. Staff surveyed the impacted area and found a larger amount of product on the ground, than initially had been reported. The health department then called IDEM's North Regional Office in South Bend to report the spill.

An IDEM On Scene Coordinator responded to the scene and observed an area alongside a roadway stained with diesel fuel. Staff determined a cleanup was necessary to protect the area's groundwater and surface water. He hired a contractor to conduct a cleanup. IDEM staff oversaw the removal actions, which included to excavate soil in an area approximately 55 feet long, 7 feet wide and an average of 4 feet deep, remove approximately 36 tons of contaminated soil and replace this area with clean fill. The contaminated soil was taken to a permitted landfill for proper disposal. The cleanup was completed on March 23.

During the cleanup, a citizen told the contractor about witnessing a vehicle being repaired at the site, and was able to furnish the company's name on the repair truck. The information was given to an IDEM On Scene Coordinator. He contacted Sargent Chris McNamara, a Conservation Officer at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Investigation Section to assist with an investigation to determine the responsible party. Sargent McNamara contacted the repair company. He obtained the necessary paperwork, which included invoices about the repair work done by the company at the location of the spill. Sargent McNamara presented IDEM with the evidence to identify the responsible party. The responsible party agreed to pay for the cleanup.



Site Snapshot

IDEM action:

Investigated, oversaw the removal and cleanup of spilled diesel fuel and assisted other agency to locate the responsible party.

Location:

Alongside roadway in an industrial park in Elkhart, Elkhart County

Primary substance of concern:

Petroleum product

Environmental threats:

Contamination to groundwater and surface water from diesel fuel

For further information about IDEM's emergency response actions at this site, contact staff at the North Regional Office in South Bend at toll free (800) 451-6027 or at the following phone numbers:

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